



**NCCDD Executive Director
Chris Egan**

A Message from Our Executive Director

In October, the disability community came together to focus on an important campaign for people with disabilities: employment.

Celebrating its 70th anniversary, we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) while bringing attention to the unacceptable and high unemployment rate for those with disabilities.

The theme for October's NDEAM is "My disability is one part of who I am" and that's where NCCDD places its focus too. We know that people with disabilities are people first and foremost and they have a desire to utilize their talent, skills and training to make a decent wage so they can live independently.

NCCDD currently funds initiatives that assist people with disabilities with employment and financial security. In North Carolina, Project SEARCH, Reaching the Summit of Success and Learning and Earning After High School are NCCDD programs working to increase competitive employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In the private sector, some of the state's biggest employers participated in the North Carolina Business Leadership Network's (NCBLN) fall conference on October 22 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. The conference featured a number of presentations such as "Inclusion: Bringing Employees with Disabilities Completely into the Company Workforce" by Great Wolf Lodge and "Bringing Technology into the Workplace to Release the Productive Talents of People with Disabilities."

While we take time to celebrate the contributions made by workers in North Carolina with disabilities, we also know we have a long way to go to make employment a reality for so many more.

Taking Initiative: Project SEARCH

Focusing on transition opportunities for young adults after they leave high school, NCCDD funded Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center for its Project SEARCH High School Transition program in North Carolina. It provides internship for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities in an integrated workplace setting.

"Project SEARCH utilizes community and business resources that already exist in the community to increase employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)," said Linda Emery, program specialist for Project SEARCH.

Project SEARCH is a unique, business led, one-year school-to-work program that occurs place entirely at the workplace and provides total job immersion facilitating a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through worksite rotations.

It also teaches important soft skills like working with others, socialization and more to help participants truly excel in life after high school.

At the beginning of 2015, with the help of the Council, Project SEARCH expanded from seven to 10 sites across North Carolina.

"Project SEARCH has allowed businesses to see and value the talent people with disabilities bring to work," said Emery regarding traits like attention-to-detail, great memory and a strong work ethic. "It has also allowed participants to learn new skills, build their confidence and see their own personal value as they work in meaningful places of employment."

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Project | SEARCH



Community Highlight: Tyson Haith

Every day, Monday through Friday, 19-year-old Tyson Haith is picked up by bus and travels from Burlington to Mebane. He arrives at his job at Sports Endeavors, a sports retail distributor, and clocks in. The once intern is now a full-time employee, responsible for collecting merchandise and packing orders.

Tyson began his venture into employment as a Project SEARCH intern. Project SEARCH is a collaboration between NC Vocational Rehabilitation, the Alamance-Burlington School System, Cardinal Innovations, Cape Fear Vocational Services and Alamance

Regional Medical Center which provides the interns the opportunity to grow in their skills, and have more edge as they look for employment after high school. Tyson, an intern from the program's pilot class, is a shining example of that success.

He worked specifically in the supply chain and environmental services of Alamance Regional Medical Center. Tyson Haith Sr., Tyson's father, remarked that the interns played a crucial role in changing people's perceptions of individuals with disabilities.

"Since Project SEARCH started, it's opened up a lot of options because people can see they can do the job. That's a real eye opener," his father said.

Having interviewed at businesses like Planet Fitness, Dollar General and Cracker Barrel, Tyson has found his fit at Sports Endeavors. He likes working in Mebane, having his own money in the bank and finishing off a day of work with TV.

Raised in a home where employment and education were held in the highest regard, Tyson says he likes his job, "I do it to get paid every two weeks." His father has seen Tyson grow from a successful straight-A student to the second man of the house, ready to take on new responsibilities.

"Don't push your kid into a box," Tyson Sr. says, "Usually, they get put in the box. Keep an open mind and you'll be surprised."

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Taking Initiative: Project SEARCH *(continued from front page)*

The success rate of the program is determined through successful employment. Nationally, 73% of Project SEARCH graduates are employed in a non-seasonal, competitive place of work.

In North Carolina, these Project SEARCH sites boast successful employment rates.

- High Point Regional Health System, Greensboro - 83% obtained employment;
- Friends Homes, Inc., Greensboro, NC - 75% obtained employment
- Carolinas Healthcare Mercy Hospital, Charlotte, NC - 60% obtained employment
- Durham Regional Hospital (an Affiliate of Duke University) - 43% obtained employment

For the school year 2014-15, three additional programs graduated interns. There were over 50 interns who completed the program in May 2015. For the 2015-16 school year, two more programs began and approximately 65 interns are currently enrolled in nine programs.

The Project SEARCH Program for North Carolina is currently seeking applications from community partners that want to implement Project SEARCH. For more information, contact Linda Emery, linda.emery@cchmc.org. For more information about Project SEARCH, please visit www.projectsearch.us.



The Five Year Planning Process

The NCCDD kicked off development of its FFY 2017 - 2021 five-year state plan (5YSPD) in May with an engaging development session where members discussed topic areas important to them. In April, the first meeting of the Council's 5YSPD Ad Hoc Committee involved introduction to the full plan development process which the ad hoc is charged to share with other Council members.



Listen. Gather. Act.

From June 21st to July 29th the NCCDD staff facilitated 14 listening sessions across the state to gather input from NC citizens while the Council simultaneously collected input from surveys targeted to people with disabilities, families and service providers/community stakeholders.

NCCDD received almost 550 responses (543 actual: 45 by self advocates; 244 by parents; 254 providers/community stakeholders) to the surveys and had 123 listening session attendees. The August quarterly meeting included the second development session where members discussed/shared outcome objectives within the topic areas identified in May incorporating data from surveys and listening sessions and preliminary environmental scan data developed by the NC's University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Data from listening sessions, surveys, member input and the environmental scan, with consideration of Administration for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities' (AIDD) 7/2015 Final Rules, the Council will put together a draft of 5YSPD State Plan FFY 2017 – 2021. Goals and objectives will be considered for release to the public for additional input and development.

The 5YSPD FFY 2017 – 2021 will be submitted to AIDD no later than August 15, 2016 and implementation begins on October 1, 2016.



Calendar of Events

Fourth Annual NCRA/NCATP GREAT Conference

When: Nov. 4 - 6, 2015

Where: Hilton North Raleigh, Raleigh

Details: www.ncatp.org

5th Annual WNC Regional Transition to Adulthood Fair

When: Nov. 7, 2015

Where: Mission Reuter Children's Outpatient Center, Asheville

Time: 11 AM - 4 PM

Details: <http://bit.ly/1P07ku8>

A Year with Frog and Toad

(audio described performance)

When: Nov. 15, 2015

Where: Gaddy-Goodwin Teaching Theatre, Raleigh

Time: 1 PM & 5 PM

Details: raleighlittletheatre.org/shows/15-16/frogtoad.html

NCCDD Council Meeting

When: Nov. 18 -20, 2015

Where: Hilton North Raleigh, Raleigh

Details: www.nccdd.org

For more calendar events, visit www.nccdd.org



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month!

My disability is one part of who I am.

At work, it's what people can do that matters.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month — Celebrating 70 Years!



OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

3125 Poplarwood Court • Suite 200 • Raleigh, NC 27604
919-850-2901 (TTY) • Fax 919-850-2915
Toll Free 800-357-6916 (TTY)
www.nccdd.org



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